

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	North Carolina
COUNTY:	Granville
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON:	
Hill Airy	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:			
Not for publication, see continuation sheet 2			
CITY OR TOWN:		CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:	
Stovall vicinity		Second	
The Hon. L. H. Fountain			
STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
North Carolina	37	Granville	077

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:	
Mr. Herbert T. Gregory	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
P. O. Box 130	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
Leamington	Ontario, Canada
	CODE
	260

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:	
Granville County Courthouse	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
Oxford	North Carolina
	CODE
	37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:	
DATE OF SURVEY:	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:	
STREET AND NUMBER:	
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:
	CODE

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2. Location

On private road, 1.6 mi. east of U.S. 15

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION.	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						
<p>Hill Airy is descriptively named, for it is dramatically sited atop a hill, approached by a long driveway that climbs straight up the slope. In front of the house is an impressive boxwood garden, with great boxwoods--English and tree--arranged in a Maltese cross. To the east of the house are the chimney base and foundations of a building described as the kitchen; to the rear are a number of outbuildings, including a small structure with a large chimney, a log building, and some farm structures.</p> <p>The frame dwelling--a five-bay, one-and-one-half-story house on a raised basement--combines a typically eighteenth century house form with vernacular Greek Revival finish, which is employed consistently throughout. The siding is molded, and door and window frames are symmetrically molded with corner blocks, including those on the narrow dormers. Most doors are six-panel ones, and the first-story windows have nine-over-nine sash, while those in the dormers have four-over-four. Across the north facade extends a one-story shed; the end bays are enclosed as rooms, while the three central bays form a porch. The porch has posts rectangular in section with molded caps. At either end of the porch is a tapered, engaged post of similar design, resting on a tall pedestal base. The porch is treated as a room, with a flat-paneled wainscot (complementing the post pedestals) beneath flush sheathing. From the porch there is a door to the west shed room, said to have served as a doctor's office; access to the east shed room is only from the interior of the house. The shed is finished with a molded cornice, resembling that of the main block; evidence at the sides, where the shed and main block join, suggest that it was added soon after the main block was constructed or, if later, with care to reproduce the main block trim.</p> <p>At either end of the house is a large exterior chimney, with a double-shoulder stone base and rebuilt brick stack. Single-shoulder chimneys of similar design heat the two shed rooms. The end elevations are windowless but there are doors to small porches at the first level, and evidence of a former window in the gable. The south facade is also five bays wide, with a replacement central entrance porch. The cornice and dormer treatment repeat that of the north facade. The proportions and fenestration of this facade suggest even more strongly a reference to eighteenth century houses.</p> <p>The interior follows a center-hall plan one room deep, plus the north shed rooms. The finish throughout is rather simple, vernacular Greek Revival style, with the west room being the most elaborate. Used throughout the first floor is a simple flat-paneled wainscot and doors with six flat panels, many with carpenter locks. For the most part, architraves have symmetrical, concave moldings and plain or paneled corner blocks. In the west room there is a heavy mantel with tapered pilasters carrying a three-part frieze beneath a heavy molded cornice and shelf that break out over the frieze elements. Similar tapered pilasters interrupt the wainscot under the windows to serve as pedestals for the window architrave, which is symmetrically molded. Atop each window is an entablature, with end blocks similar to the mantel. The overdoor is quite strange, consisting of three truncated pilasters making up a three-part entablature at ceiling level. The mantel in the east room follows a form similar to that in the west, but features symmetrically molded architraves and paneled corner blocks. The shed room</p>						

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mantels are similar but simpler.

The stair rises from south to north along the rear west wall, with initial winders and a single straight flight. Thick balusters, square in section, and heavy posts with ball finials carry a rounded handrail. The second level is simply finished, with plastered walls and a beaded chair rail and baseboard. The mantels are simplified versions of those on the first floor. The basement, now inaccessible, is described as having finished rooms as well.

B. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) ca. 1841

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ Philosophy☒ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☒ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature☐ itarian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hill Airy was probably built about 1841 by Francis R. Gregory, in whose family the property still remains. It is of particular architectural interest because it combines vigorous vernacular Greek Revival trim with a traditional one-and-one-half-story house form characteristic of eighteenth century Virginia dwellings and possibly deriving from the Gregory family's Virginia origins. The small house is considerably enhanced by its dramatic hilltop setting, the boxwood garden, and a group of outbuildings.

In the early 1830s William O. Gregory (1804-1885) came from Mecklenburg County, Virginia, directly south to Granville County, North Carolina, where he began to purchase tracts of land. By 1841 he owned over 4,000 acres in various parts of the county and evidently made his home on Grassy Creek. In that year Francis Roger Gregory of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, followed his brother William's lead and moved to Granville County, purchasing from Lewis Webb of Richmond, Virginia, a parcel of land "on both sides of Island Creek," adjoining property owned by his brother. He paid \$6,000 for the tract, estimated at 2,373½ acres, and it is believed that he built the house still on the property shortly thereafter. William continued to expand his holdings (to nearly 10,000 acres in 1855, having a real and personal property evaluation of \$90,000 by 1860), but Francis apparently lacked his brother's urge to acquire land, for tax lists from 1842 onward show him consistently as owning his original and evidently only purchase--2,370 or 2,373 acres, estimated at \$5,000--and holding 20 to 35 slaves. The census of 1850 lists Francis as a farmer with \$6,000 in real estate; his family consisted of his wife, Nancy; four sons, Hubbard (Herbert), aged 17; Mark, aged 15; Francis R., aged 13; and William, aged 6, with the elder two listed as students; and one daughter, Mary, aged 10. Francis is listed as a "farmer," but family tradition reports that he was a physician who had attended the University of Virginia; alumni records do not list him, but the tax listing of 1846 refers to him as "Dr.," as does his wife's tombstone.

Francis R. Gregory made his will in 1853; it was proved in 1854. He expressed his wish to be buried "at the old family graveyard in Mecklenburg, Virginia." His "dwelling house with one hundred acres" and all the "house and kitchen furniture carriage and horses" were to go to his wife during her lifetime; thereafter the property was to go to his sons. His watch was to go to Francis Roger; his library to William Henry; his portrait and

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pictures to M. Alexander; and his portable desk to Martha--provisions that bear out the traditional description of the family as being people of culture and education and "great readers."

After Francis's death, his widow Nancy evidently remained at the plantation with the children; the acreage was kept intact and the sons were able to attend universities. Herbert, the eldest, studied at the University of North Carolina (1851-1852); by 1855 he was listing his property (555 acres) separately from that of his mother and the other children and owned 4 slaves. Francis Roger also studied at the University of North Carolina (1857-1858) and at the University of Virginia (1859-1860, where he studied medicine. By 1859 he too was listing his property separately from his mother's--the 740 acres was that allotted to him when under his mother's guardianship. During the Civil War, Francis served as surgeon and captain in the 70th Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company B--a regiment called the "First Junior Reserves," formed in 1864 to replace the ranks depleted as the war wore on. After the war he returned to the neighborhood and established himself as a physician.

Family tradition states that Herbert, the elder son, came into ownership of the property that included his father's farm; evidently the difficulties of Reconstruction did not undermine the family's economic base--the 1867 tax list shows Nancy holding 600 acres, Herbert with 550, and Francis with 734--and the early settler, William, with thousands of acres intact. By 1870, the census showed Herbert a farmer with a wife and child, with real estate valued at \$28,000 and personal property at \$4,100; his brother the doctor, still unmarried, held real estate valued at \$2,500.

Herbert Gregory died in 1891; his death was briefly recorded, probably by his son William Thorp, in a poignant entry in a ledger still in family ownership: "Sept 7, 1891, Cldy Ther 68^o Pa was buried." After Herbert's death, his wife Ella had a life interest in his estate and remained on the place along with her eldest son, Herbert. Along with operating the farm he raised pure-bred saddle horses and cattle. Ella's will of 1937 left "the land known as my homeplace" to her son, Francis R. In the early twentieth century Francis had moved to Canada, arriving in Leamington, Ontario, in 1901, where he introduced the production of flue-cured tobacco and played an important role in that industry. The property is now owned by his son, Herbert T. Gregory.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research and architectural description by Catherine W. Cockshutt, survey supervisor.

Granville County Records, Granville County Courthouse, Oxford, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Tax Lists, Census Lists).

Granville County Records, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills, Estate Papers, Tax Lists, Census Lists).

Gregory, Herbert T., interview with Catherine Cockshutt, 1973.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds
NW	36° 24' 42"	78° 34' 01"		0	0	0
NE	36° 24' 42"	78° 33' 47"				
SE	36° 24' 29"	78° 33' 47"				
SW	36° 24' 29"	78° 34' 01"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 30 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Survey and Planning Unit

ORGANIZATION

Division of Archives and History

DATE

21 June 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:

109 East Jones Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Raleigh

STATE

North Carolina

CODE

37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

Thornton W. Mitchell

Title

Acting Director, Division of
Archives and History

Date

21 June 1974

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

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Gregory family papers, family tree, in possession of Herbert T. Gregory.
University of North Carolina, alumni records.

University of Virginia, alumni records

Henderson, Archibald, and Wooten, Bayard. Old Homes and Gardens of North
Carolina. Chapel Hill. University of North Carolina Press for Garden
Club of North Carolina, 1939.

